

City of Baraboo  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
August 12, 2019 – Minutes

**Present:** Roy Franzen, Jim Francisco, Mike Plautz, Angela Witczak, Craig Schlender, Chantel Steinhorst & Mike Hardy

**Also Present:** Mayor Palm, City Attorney Truman, Police Chief Schauf, 3 members of BASCO Board of Directors, 6 citizens representing the skatepark and 11 citizens representing opposition to placing a dog park at Attridge Park.

Franzen called the meeting to order at 5:32pm. Legal Posting of the Agenda had been met. Witczak moved and Francisco seconded approval of the July 8, 2019 minutes. Motion carried.

Franzen moved to approve the agenda with Action item c (Pierce Park field 5 naming, being conducted before presentations, seconded by Witczak. Motion carried.

**Action Items:** Dan Lewison presented a request on behalf of the Braboo Thunder softball club to name field #5 at Pierce Park “Don Pierce Field” in exchange for a donation from the Pierce family of \$20,000-\$25,000 (yet to be determined). The donation would be used for future field improvements, possibly lights. Witczak moved to accept the donation and recommend naming the field for Don Pierce. Seconded by Franzen. Motion carried.

**Presentations :** Marlen Buchanon appeared on behalf of the BASCO Board of Directors to thank the Commission for their support and guidance in preparing a proposal for the City taking over management of the senior center. She stated at this time, BASCO would like to put their request on hold while their Board has time to review and determine their next steps. She wished to continue to work with the Commission and will return at a later date.

Hardy presented a powerpoint introduction to skatepark design and considerations with allowing BMX bikes in skateparks. Examples of what other communities do was also presented. Hardy stated concerns over the size of the existing skatepark create issues for the city in allowing bike use, but the city needs an ordinance to address bike use so that staff can enforce it.

**Action Items:** Franzen stated that skaters raised \$25,000 when the skatepark was first built. He believed that it should be skateboards only. Witczak and Francisco agreed. Steinhorst stated that we need to provide space for bikes too and felt the skatepark should be available to both users. Plautz agreed with Steinhorst and offered to address the safety concerns that certain times of the week be bike-only and certain times skateboards only. Schlender felt that the area was too small for both and didn’t have any space to expand. Police Chief Schauf stated that he was on the initial planning of the park about 17 years ago and that the fence was installed partly to restrict bikes. Franzen moved to recommend an ordinance to restrict the skatepark to skateboards only. Seconded by Francisco. Motion passed 4-2 with Plautz and Steinhorst voting no on the ordinance.

Hardy reminded the Commission that concerns over wet grounds over the past 2 years that has seen our dog park membership drop from 220 to 150 annual users caused concern, and several design options were presented which were not seen as permanent fixes. This led to considerations to remove the lowest areas from the existing park and considering a future site for a second dog park. He added that when the City Forest was purchased by West Baraboo, they had a future dog park planned for that, but Hardy was not sure if that was still in their plans, so whether the City would even need a second dog park or not was still undetermined. Hardy told the Commission that he had a new plan for the Liston Dog Park that he felt could substantially address complaints of wet grounds without losing as much land as originally feared. He had gotten quotes on the new plan which came in under budget, so if engineering approved of the plan, Hardy felt there would be no need for a second dog park in the city. Several residents of the Island Court neighborhood spoke on their opposition to placing a dog park in Attridge Park. Most comments were that Island Court was a dead end street with little noise or traffic and they wanted it kept that way. Franzen, Plautz and Steinhorst voiced support to make the proposed improvements to the existing dog park provided engineering approved. Witczak asked Hardy to see if West Baraboo still plans to put a dog park in the old City Forest. Schlender noted that while Liston dog park doesn’t have many homes that are very close to it, we did notice all area homeowners before building the park to address concerns and if we did a second park anywhere, we would be doing the same to those residents. Plautz noted that he lives near the Liston Dog park and hasn’t really had any noise or traffic problems in that area. Witczak moved to fix the Liston Dog Park using Hardy’s new plan and authorizing up to \$11,000 in Park Segregated Funds to make the improvements, pending City Engineer approval. Seconded by Francisco. Motion carried.

Hardy presented the draft Swimming Pool Study from MSA. He noted that MSA would like some feedback before they finalize it. Hardy reviewed 3 options proposed – maintain status quo (\$600,000-\$1 million); expansion/renovation (\$2.9 million to \$4.3 million) or all new on same site (\$7 million to \$7.6 million). Hardy suggested a second public input session before the next Commission meeting to get feedback from the community, especially since significant fundraising will likely be needed. Franzen stated that prices are high, but there are obvious needs and the Expansion/Renovation option makes the most sense.

Steinhorst shared her findings of what other neighboring pools with splash pads had done. Commission members overall seemed to favor the Expansion/Renovation option but agreed more input from the community was needed. Witczak moved to postpone discussion on a recommendation until the September meeting following a public input session so that public comment and support could be considered in the recommendation. Seconded by Steinhorst. Motion carried.

Hardy present a new department organizational structure, creating a Natural Resources Division and rolling forestry and zoo operations into that division along with future river operations. Witczak moved to recommend the structure as presented. Seconded by Plautz. Motion carried.

Francisco explained that he had received a request by a non resident who owns rental property in the City that they would like to pay resident rates. Francisco moved to allow non-residents who own property in the City to pay resident rates. Franzen seconded to allow for further discussion. Hardy presented a spreadsheet summary of a survey of 14 area communities and how they handle non residents. The majority do the same things as we do, only a couple allow for non resident discounts. Motion failed on a 1-4-1 vote with Francisco the only yes vote and Schlender abstaining.

Hardy presented a proposal to recommend 2020 fees to the Finance Committee. The only changes recommended were a 1.5% increase in Civic Center long term leases; a \$5 increase in Community Garden Plot rentals; a \$10 reduction in Adult Cornhole registration fees and a \$5 reduction in Youth Gymnastics fees. Franzen felt that with our struggles to get more gardeners, even though annual rent is only \$25 and the garden is losing money, we should not raise fees at this time. Franzen moved to accept the proposed 2020 fee schedule as presented, with the exception that Community Garden would remain at \$25/plot. Seconded by Francisco. Motion carried.

Hardy presented a draft 2020 Capital Projects budget for consideration. The budget included those items specified in our 2017-2021 CORP budget for 2020. Steinhorst requested that a drinking fountain be added to the Maxwell-Potter Conservancy shelter. Playground replacements were noted as the biggest concern, as 4 were older and past their life expectancy. Hardy stated that they have had several parts replaced over the years, and had been repainted. All 4 were safe, but should be considered for replacement as suggested in the CORP with Langer and Ritzenthaler the first to go. Witczak moved to recommend the 2020 Capital Improvements Projects to be recommended for inclusion in the budget with Langer and Ritzenthaler playgrounds replaced in 2020. Seconded by Steinhorst. Motion carried.

**Information Items:** City Attorney Truman presented a preliminary update on open meetings laws requirements and noticed the Commission that she was notified of a violation during the May Parks Commission Annual Park Tour when a quorum was present for the tour and the dog park water problems were discussed along with potential sites a new park could be considered while on the tour. She noted that even though the meeting was adjourned, whenever a quorum of members is present, items that could lead to future discussion or decisions should not be discussed unless posted properly. Truman distributed a copy of the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law Compliance Guide and stated she would attend a future meeting as time allowed to answer any questions and provide a better training as she has been attending all City Committees to provide the same training for members.

**Staff Report:** July revenues were \$36,791.38

Hardy reported that intern Vetter was not able to report on summer recreation survey results as he had an interview to attend. The information will be shared at the next meeting. Hardy gave an update on zoo construction projects as well as an update on bidding schedules for the Riverwalk bridge and kayak launch projects.

**Comments From Commissioners:** Franzen thanks Steinhorst for her work on the Ochsner Park Centennial event Committee. He said it was a good event and people there had a good time.

**Next Regular Meeting:** September 9, 2019 at 6:30pm (following the pool input session).

Witczak motioned to adjourn, Francisco seconded. Motion carried

Respectfully Submitted,  
Mike Hardy, Parks, Recreation & Forestry Director